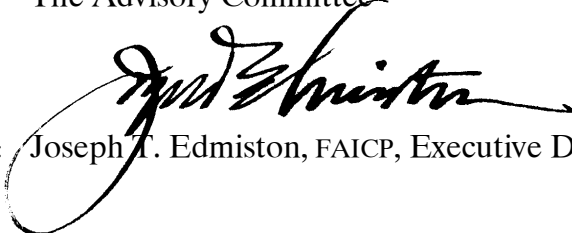


Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: July 25, 2005

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 11: Consideration of resolution supporting grants from the California Department of Transportation to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for planning related to the Arroyo Seco Parkway National Scenic Byway.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution supporting grants from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for planning related to the Arroyo Seco Parkway National Scenic Byway.

Legislative Authority: Section 33211(c) of Public Resources Code.

Background: The Arroyo Seco Parkway was designated a National Scenic Byway in 2002. The designation recognizes the historic, cultural, natural and recreational intrinsic qualities along the historic parkway. On July 23, 2001, the Conservancy authorized a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans for planning and implementation of a Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for the Arroyo Seco Parkway, and granted funds to the MRCA to carry out the project. The Corridor Management Plan was substantially completed in August 2004, but has yet to be adopted by Caltrans.

Funding from the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byways Program was recently allocated to Caltrans for two grants that will begin to implement the CMP, and Caltrans requested that MRCA administer the grants. It is not known at this time what the mechanism for funding will be, whether through amendments to the existing Cooperative Agreement with the Conservancy or through grants directly to MRCA from the Local Assistance Division of Caltrans. If the Cooperative Agreement is used, the Board will be asked to authorize the amendments and grant the funds to MRCA.

The first grant is for \$336,400 for the development of a Comprehensive Visitor Interpretation and Marketing Plan. This was one of the largest allocations made in this round of national funding and one of only two projects funded in California. The project will include audience research, an inventory of interpretive assets, development of interpretive themes, and creation of an interpretive plan and design guidelines.

The second grant is for \$25,000 to create a non-profit Byway Organization. This grant can be renewed for \$25,000 per year for four years. The Byway Organization will be a non-profit organization focused on successful implementation of the CMP, and will become the primary point of contact for community groups, public agencies, and byway travelers. The project will fund hiring a part-time director to establish the organization, create a governing board, create strategic, financial, and long-term plans, and build relationships with byway supporters. Both grants require a 20% match, which will be provided by in-kind services from several local organizations.